

Washington, DC -- The full House Judiciary Committee today unanimously passed Congresswoman Linda Sánchez' bipartisan bill, H.R. 1512, the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program Reimbursement Protection Act. The bill would allow states and localities to be reimbursed for some of the costs of incarcerating criminal aliens before and during trial.

"States and counties shouldn't have to shoulder the financial burden of incarcerating criminal aliens because of failures in the federal government's border policy," said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez. "This bill will give states and localities more opportunities for reimbursement from the federal government so they aren't forced to release suspects early just because they can't afford to keep them in custody."

Under the Bush Administration, the Department of Justice has limited SCAAP payments, stipulating that states and localities can only be reimbursed for the cost of incarcerating a criminal alien if the alien is eventually convicted of a crime, making many of the costs associated with pre-trial detention ineligible for reimbursement.

"Too often, states and counties are forced to cut important public safety programs because the burden of incarcerating criminal aliens is too high and the federal reimbursement too low," Sánchez said. "I've heard about this problem from law enforcement officers in Southern California and across the nation, and I'm determined to fix it."

The legislation is a result of conversations between Congresswoman Sánchez, law enforcement agencies, and their officers on how to fix this problem. H.R. 1512 has 56 Democratic and Republican cosponsors and is endorsed by the U.S./Mexico Border Counties Coalition, the California State Association of Counties, the Los Angeles Sheriffs Department and numerous law enforcement organizations, including the National Sheriff's Association, the California State Sheriffs' Association, the Sheriff's Association of Texas, and the Virginia Sheriffs' Association.